ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A technique for authenticating a user to a server using SIP messages includes fowarding an SIP request from the user agent to the server. The server then forwards a request for authentication to the user agent in response to the invite request, the request for authentication including information that the authentication will be performed using a UMTS AKA mechanism. The user agent then forwards and authentication response to the server in accordance with the UMTS AKA mechanism and the server then performs the appropriate actions to perform an invoked SIP procedure in response to the SIP request. The SIP request may include any standardized SIP request including an SIP INVITE request or an SIP REGISTER request. The request for authentication may include one of an SIP 401 Unauthorized code or an SIP 407 Proxy Authentication Required code. The request for authentication should include UMTS AKA RAND and AUTN vectors, which may be included in an SIP WWW-Authenticate or Proxy-Authenticate response header field. The authentication response should include one of either a UMTS AKA RES code or an AUTS code or an error code.